Two Letters of Resignation.

It seemed curious that Mr. Justice Falconbridge should have sent to the Senate two letters of resignation. His second, which was a political manifesto, was published by himself. The Senate has done well in giving his first letter also to the public. A comparison of the two, and of the circumstances under which they were severally written, could hardly fail to throw light on the mystery.

The list of names for honorary degrees was voted by the Senate on the 23rd of May. On the 25th of May, Mr. Justice Falconbridge, with that list, including the name to which he afterwards took exception, before him, sent in his first letter of resignation as a member of the Senate:

"Toronto, 25th May, 1896.

"Sir,—I hereby resign my position as a member of the Senate of the University of Toronto. Be good enough to inform the Senate.

"Yours truly,

(Signed) "W. G. Falconbridge.

"The Registrar, University of Toronto."

Here no reason for the resignation is assigned: an unusual and scarcely courteous omission, which could apparently be explained only by supposing that the reason was one of a personal and private character such as delicacy might forbid the writer to disclose. Had the reason been one of public principle, it surely would not have been withheld.

Some days afterwards, on June 8th, Mr. Justice Falconbridge wrote his second letter of resignation, duplicating the first, and, in itself, scarcely admissible, since he who has once resigned cannot well resign again:

"Osgoode Hall,

"Toronto, June 8, 1896.

"The Senate of the University of Toronto:

"Gentlemen,—Having been informed through the newspapers that you had unanimously resolved to confer the honorary degree of LL.D. on Mr. Goldwin Smith, I at once made up my mind that the atmosphere of the Senate was not a congenial one for me, not merely as a British subject, but as one holding her Majesty's commissions, and I immediately announced my intention of resigning my seat at your Board; but as the resolution in question was passed at a meeting at which I was not present (and for which meeting there had been no notice given naming the persons to whom it might

be proposed to offer the degree), I was anxious, before formally resigning, to see the Vice-Chancellor on his return to the city, so as to ask him for information on the subject. After the lapse of several days I saw him, and he assured me that he knew nothing whatever of the matter. I then forwarded my resignation to the Registrar.

" I have taken it for granted that the hasty and ill-considered step which you have taken cannot, unfortunately, be retraced.

" It is unnecessary to say why I find fault with the conferring of this honor on Mr. Smith. All men loyal to the Crown in Canada will understand why.

" And I venture to predict that the immediate result of this grotesque resolution will be disastrous to the University, for thousands of British-Canadian fathers will ask themselves whether your institution is an entirely safe one to be entrusted with the moulding for life of the character of a youth.

" I beg to subscribe myself, with regret at parting from you, and with more regret at the cause of parting, " Your obedient servant,

(Signed) " W. G. FALCONBRIDGE."

In this second letter a reason is assigned with a vengeance; and it is one which an inspection of the first letter would never have suggested, but, on the contrary, would have seemed absolutely to preclude. The reason now given is political. It is the appearance in the list of a name to which Mr. Justice Falconbridge objects on political grounds, and for the selection of which he condemns the Senate in terms scarcely polite or even decorous, telling it that through its " grotesque decision " the University would forfeit the confidence of the country.

The pretext that the first resignation was not formal, and that a second consequently was required, is obviously hollow; the first resignation, though it gave no reason, was as formal and complete as it could be.

To what was the change due? In the interim between the writing of the first and the writing of the second letter, what was it that had taken place? The writer alone can give us a full account of the workings of his own mind. But he tells us himself that before writing the second letter he had a conversation on the subject with Vice-Chancellor Mulock. The Vice-Chancellor, he says, disclaimed any knowledge of the matter. Nevertheless, the conversation was immediately followed by an entirely new development, and in a political direction, on the part of Mr. Justice Falconbridge. The Vice-Chancellor absented himself without explanation from the meeting of Convocation at which the degree reprobated by his friend was to be conferred; a proceeding which could hardly fail to be construed as a sign of dissent from the unanimous action of the Senate.

ACADEMICUS.

1896. Falconbridge.